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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 000865

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [KMPI](#) [ECON](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL AGENDA ROLLED OUT SOFTLY TO THE JORDANIAN PUBLIC

REF: A. AMMAN 520

[B](#). 05 AMMAN 8823

Classified By: CDA Daniel Rubinstein for Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#). (C) Jordan's 10-year comprehensive reform plan, the National Agenda, was rolled out to the public via a popular television news show and the Internet in late January. Plans to aggressively market the National Agenda and sell its benefits to a partially-skeptical public are on hold while a ministerial team studying the report defines its reform priorities. End Summary.

TV PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS NATIONAL AGENDA

[1](#)2. (U) Former Deputy Prime Minister Marwan Muasher appeared on Jordan Television's popular "Sixty Minutes" news program on January 27 to discuss the report of the Royal Commission for the National Agenda (ref B). Muasher, who headed the commission, described the eight subject areas covered by the report and stressed how the commission "represented Jordan's social spectrum." He further stated that the first phase of implementation of the report would "create a political foundation in the country, including an elections law and improvements in women's rights, the media and civil society." Muasher was careful to note that the report's recommendations did not contain draft laws or endorse any specific legislation. He also announced that the report's main document of approximately 200 pages was now available on the Internet (in Arabic) at <http://nationalagenda.jo>

[1](#)3. (U) Minister of Public Sector Reform Salem Khazaaleh, whose ministry now encompasses the Government Performance Directorate (GPD) responsible for tracking implementation of the National Agenda (ref A), also appeared on the same program. He reminded viewers that PM Bakhit had formed a ministerial committee to study the report, and stated that "the government needs to define priorities in accordance with the National Agenda recommendations in order to begin implementing development programs."

MARKETING CAMPAIGN STILL ON HOLD

[1](#)4. (C) Poloff asked Manar Dabbas, Executive Director of the GPD, whether Muasher's interview marked the long-awaited public launch of the National Agenda. NOTE: The main National Agenda report has been bound and ready for distribution since November (ref B). END NOTE. Dabbas responded affirmatively, saying that in addition to being posted on the Internet, his office was giving hard copies of the report to "stakeholders" in the reform process, including foreign donors, NGOs, and political groups. He also said that in coordination with the GOJ, mass-circulation Arabic daily Al Ghad had run a major story on February 1 on the National Agenda's objectives for the next decade, with an emphasis on its economic recommendations, along with both positive and critical assessments from economists and former government officials.

[1](#)5. (C) When asked if the GOJ had other immediate plans to promote the National Agenda, such as a statement by PM Bakhit, Dabbas replied "no." He said that ideas such as a series of town hall meetings and "roadshows" throughout the country (ref B) were still on the table, but that no major promotional activity would likely take place until the ministerial committee studying the National Agenda had completed its work.
Rubinstein